

Apt. 16, The Merrill, Berkeley,
October 1, 1923.

I should have written to you before this, but there has been much to do, and so much confusion, since the fire. Today I have your kind note and will no longer delay.

The fire swept down with the greatest rapidity before the strong northern gale, and we had about 20 minutes to prepare. The University boys carried almost everything out of the house and piled it on an adjoining vacant lot, where it was burned up. We escaped with what we had on, and what we had hastily thrust into two grips. We got this apartment the same evening, and were thankful to get a roof over our heads.

While the fire took most of the things carried out of the house, some things must have been taken away, for a few trifles have since been brought to us. The real reason I delayed writing to you was that I had a faint hope that some one might have picked up the manuscript of my Mojave paper and saved it for me. But the chance is infinitesimal. I had put it and some notebooks in a small grip, and I blame myself that in the confusion it was not cared for.

I thank you most sincerely for the interest you so kindly took in it and Stanford University for its willingness to publish it. It was practically finished, needing only the copying of a few pages—and I was not entirely dissatisfied with it after this final revision. The introduction was the expansion of a paper I read to the Sinapsis Club at the Citrus Experiment Station, and they had a copy of it made by their stenographer. The Systematic Catalogue was based on one I made for the Desert Laboratory. Possibly from these papers I may try to reconstruct the thing. But all my notebooks are gone, and the undertaking seems formidable. Any thought of the kind must wait until we are once more settled; then I will know if I have courage to try.

We fortunately had considerable insurance, so that we can rebuild, or buy a new house, but it will have to be a smaller and poorer one than we had, at the present exorbitant prices of labor and material. My wife faces the loss with the greatest bravery, and I try to imitate her, and we are both well.

S. B. Parish.

The main address of the evening was made by the guest of honor, Dr. Carl O. Sauer, Professor of Geography in the University of California, who spoke on the relation of the plant cover of a country to its geographic problems.—W. L. JEPSON.

THE ANNUAL DINNER FOR 1929

The annual dinner of the Society for 1929 was held in Berkeley on February 23. The dinner itself was preceded by an all-day session held in Wheeler Hall, at which professional papers were read. At

the morning session Professor W. A. Setchell of the Department of Botany, University of California, presided, at the afternoon session, Professor W. W. Mackie of the College of Agriculture, University of California. The papers read fell under twenty-one titles as follows.

Morning session: Effect of high temperatures on coniferous seedlings, by Frederick S. Baker, Division of Forestry, University of California. Factors affecting the photosynthesis rate and the sugar-starch relation in the leaf, by R. M. Holman, University of California. Reversible environmental modifications of *Ruppia*, by William Albert Setchell, University of California. The University of California Botanic Garden, by T. H. Goodspeed, University of California. Tertiary climates as indicated by fossil plants, by R. W. Chaney, Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C. The growth of plants in a controlled environment as related to ecological investigations, by A. R. Davis, University of California. The significance of local plant names in relation to the prehistoric and historic contacts of the Philippine peoples, by Elmer D. Merrill, University of California. The species of Hopi corn, by W. W. Mackie, University of California. The use of native plants by primitive peoples and early settlers in California, by Mrs. I. M. Blochman.

Afternoon session: The relationship of the Monocotyledons, by Douglas H. Campbell, Stanford University. Spreading versus appressed pubescence as a diagnostic specific character, as illustrated by the genus *Lupinus*, by Charles Piper Smith, San Jose High School. Chromosomes and classification in *Crepis*, by E. B. Babcock and Lillian Hollingshead, University of California. Structural features of wind blown pollen in relation to plant identification and classification, by H. E. McMinn, Mills College. The concept of the genus with illustrations from the ferns, by E. B. Copeland, University of California. The herbaria of the U. S. Forest Service, by Fred P. Cronemiller, U. S. Forest Service. The history of the coastal pine forests of California, by Herbert L. Mason, University of California. *Pinus jeffreyi* and *Pinus ponderosa*, by N. T. Mirov and C. L. Hill, U. S. Forest Experiment Station. Some popular fallacies concerning the growth of the California redwood, by Emanuel Fritz, Division of Forestry, University of California. Application of botanical knowledge to management of forest resources, by Leland S. Smith, U. S. Forest Service. Ecological changes in the Sierra forests, by O. M. Evans, U. S. Forest Service. A forest map of California, by Duncan Dunning, U. S. Forest Experiment Station.

The dinner in the evening was held at the Belle de Graf Restaurant and was attended by eighty members and their guests. Dr. H. M. Hall of the Carnegie Institution presided as Toastmaster. Mrs. Hilda Grinnell spoke happily on the pleasures of field work and Mr. W. I. Hutchinson of the United States Forest Service gave an illustrated lecture upon the new wilderness areas set aside by the Forest Service within the national forests of California. The company was also favored with several songs by Mr. Robt. E. Saxe, who was accom-

panied on the piano by the Society's musician-laureate, Mr. W. W. Carruth. The dinner committee was under the chairmanship of Mr. H. L. Mason.—W. L. JEPSON.

CHARLES RUSSELL ORCUTT, NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTOR.

For something over half a century Charles Russell Orcutt of San Diego has been identified with the desert areas of the southwestern United States and the adjacent regions of Mexico as a professional collector of insects, shells and plants. Botanizing in districts never before traversed, he discovered many new plants in a wide range of families. This material he sold to botanists and institutions. In only a few instances, if memory serves, did he himself publish his own discoveries as new species—and yet he was much given to publication of a kind, especially lists of species. His check list of the "Flora of Southern and Lower California" (13 pages, 1885) was sufficiently creditable in typography and much used by collectors. It was followed by a fuller list, "Botany of Southern California", in 1901 (172 pages). In 1884 he began to print a monthly journal under the caption, *The West American Scientist*. It was at that time the only medium that existed in western America for the publication of natural history notes and short articles and it, therefore, served a useful purpose. Among the contributors were such notable names as C. C. Parry, Edward Lee Greene, T. D. A. Cockerell, Josiah Keep, C. H. Eigenmann, Alice Eastwood and Geo. Vasey. Without pretensions typographically the issues nevertheless maintained a fairly uniform character for about ten years and then trailed off into chiefly advertising leaflets, irregular in size, title, make-up and form, which have been the despair of librarians who felt it a duty to maintain complete files of the journal for their "Californiana". The most happy of his writing efforts are somewhat short articles, contributed mainly to *Garden and Forest*, which give a running account of his own journeys in the desert or of the little-known elements of its flora.

As a collector and publisher Mr. Orcutt became widely known for his zeal and industry and also for his eccentricities and foibles. A characteristic production entitled "American Plants" (3 vols., 1907-1910) is a strange medley which illustrates the author's singularities. All of his publications have, at least, developed the merit of rarity. As a sort of promoter he projected most visionary botanical schemes but practically no botanists were deceived, though often much amused, by them. Although so peculiar in his business dealings with customers, he was not evilly disposed, nor malicious nor vindictive, but rather simple-minded and naive, with an intense devotion to field work which was wholly genuine and unflagging. Through him numerous desert plants, especially Cactaceae, have been introduced into cultivation. The genus *Orcuttia*, which includes two peculiar grasses of California and Lower California, was dedicated to him by Dr. Geo. Vasey and many species bear his name.